



Omak, Washington

Okanogan County Community Coalition

Demographic Information:

Omak is a small, rural, agricultural community in north central Washington State with a population of roughly 5,000. Incorporated in 1911, Omak is located in the heart of Okanogan County and includes the western portion of the Colville Indian Reservation. The County covers 5,281 square miles, making it the geographically largest county in Washington.

Much of the labor force is still grounded in traditional industries such as lumber and wood products, agriculture and wholesale trading of agricultural products. Twenty-five percent Omak's residents live below the poverty level; 36% of this group are children. Ten percent of residents have income below 50% of the poverty level. In addition, 49% of Omak School District students qualify for free or reduced lunch and 39% of students are minorities, compared to the state average of 34% and 29% respectively.

Organizational Overview:

Okanogan County Community Coalition has decades of experience working in our community. One example is last year's *True Pride Inside* social norms campaign, which involved students and was planned, implemented, and sustained under the guidance of the Coalition. The Coalition also runs culturally-competent PSAs and holds an annual Town Hall Meeting addressing underage drinking. This is done in collaboration with the Washington State Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking's "Let's Draw the Line" campaign. The Coalition also engages in Project Sticker Shock in collaboration with area retailers and community youth to raise awareness of the consequences of furnishing alcohol to minors.

Highlights of Local Problems:

Our remote location reduces access to services, such as extended out-of-school time activities for students, which can increase the prevalence of risk factors. This is reflected in the 2010 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey results, which shows that almost 36% of Omak's 6th grade students report already taking their first drink. In addition, 6th grade binge drinking rates are 67% higher than the state average. Nearly 62% of 10th grade students believe they will not get caught by their parents if they drink alcohol without permission. Our most recent survey results also show that most Omak students report tobacco as being more harmful and less accepted (compared to alcohol) by the community, peers, teachers, and parents. While 95% of 8th graders report that they have many opportunities for positive activities outside of class, and 71% of 8th graders report a high level of neighborhood attachment, half of them do not see alcohol use as risky. Students also believe underage drinking is more common than it actually is. The Coalition would like to correct this misperception since it leaves our middle school youth more vulnerable to this behavior.



Street Team members

**Okanogan County
Community Coalition**
PO Box 1688
Omak, WA 98841

Coalition website:
www.okcommunity.org

**Megan Azzano
& Andi Ervin, CPP**

Community Coordinators



Andi Ervin and Megan Azzano have collectively been working to prevent substance abuse and violence for over a decade. They are passionate about empowering the community coalition volunteers to be change agents for the future of our youth using environmental best practice prevention methods.

Our Mission:

"To effectively address the problems of youth substance abuse and violence in our community by promoting: collaboration, cooperation, communication, commitment, and cultural competency."

PRI Contacts

County Contact:

Roger Bauer

T: (509) 826-8408

rbauer@okbhc.org

School P/I Specialist:

Lesia Eiffert, ESD 171,

T: (509) 826-8541

leiffert@omakwsd.wednet.edu

Community Coordinators:

Megan Azzano & Andi Ervin

T: (509) 826-8483 &

(509) 826-8454

mazzano@okbhc.org

aervin@okbhc.org

General Statistics

Community: Omak

Population: 5,000

Zoning : Rural

Ethnic Diversity:

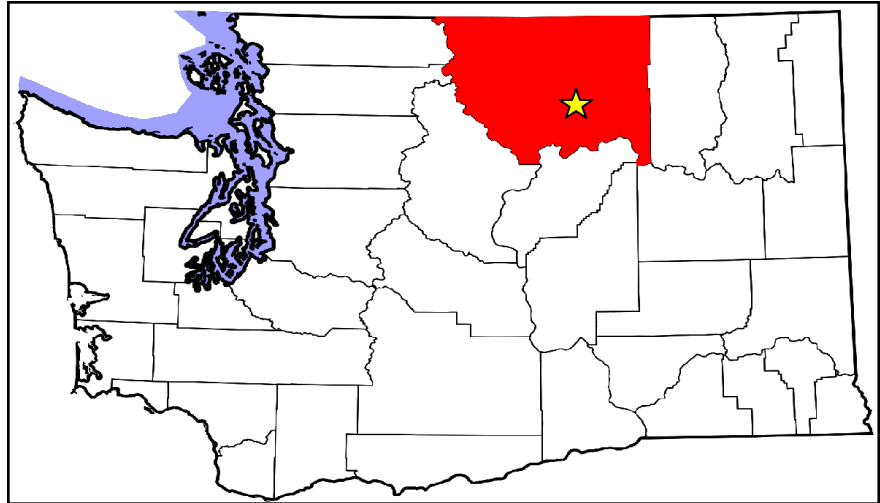
Nat. Am.	17%
Asian	0.91%
Pacific Islander	0.15%
Black	0.17%
Hispanic	12%
White	70%

Median Household Income:

\$24,089



Okanogan County, WA



Brief Community Profile

Highlights of Local Problems: Our County is not only rural, it is remote, which reduces access to services such as extended out-of-school time activities for students, and increases the prevalence of risk factors. This is reflected in the 2010 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey results, which shows that almost 36% of Omak's 6th grade students report already taking their first drink. In addition, Omak 6th grade binge drinking rates are 67% higher than the state average. Nearly 62% of Omak 10th grade students believe they will not get caught by their parents if they drink alcohol without permission. Survey results also show that Omak students report tobacco as being more harmful and less accepted by the community, peers, teachers, and parents, compared to underage drinking. Middle school youth believe underage drinking is 66% more prevalent than it is. The Okanogan County Community Coalition would like to correct this misperception since it leaves our middle school youth more vulnerable to alcohol use.

Prevention Program Summary: Our community has adjusted our previous approach of providing direct-service, curriculum-based prevention services to addressing substance abuse prevention at the community-level using environmental strategies. Following are some examples of current strategies:

- Providing medical lock-boxes for safe storage of prescription drugs in the home, starting a take-back program, and educating health care providers about safe prescribing practices.
- Educating our community about the long-term health risks caused by adverse childhood experiences.
- Examining community laws and norms and working to pass local policies that discourage substance abuse and impaired driving
- Conducting outdoor alcohol advertising assessments and encouraging stores to comply with the new rules. Retailers in Omak have a 96% compliance rate for outdoor advertising—only one business is out of compliance.

Community Resources: The Coalition has a volunteer base of over 50 community members who work to prevent substance abuse and violence in our community. We believe this is due to sustained funding and coordinated efforts provided by the DBHR Prevention Block Grant, Community Mobilization, and Drug Free Communities grant funding. OBHC has been a strong collaborative partner in the Coalition's efforts. Some of our community partners are: Head Start and Early Head Start, Sheriff's Office, North Central Narcotics Task Force, Washington State Patrol, Business Owners, Tribal Health, Public Health, Omak School District, North Central ESD, Family Health Centers, Career Path Services, Public Defender's Office, County Prosecutor's Office, Faith Based Community, Youth Street Team, Dispute Resolution Center, The Support Center, The Omak Chronicle, The Housing Authority, Tribal TANF, and parents.